

Discussion of Evaluation Responses from 2011-12 Site Visits

October 2012

Overview of this Report

This agenda item presents information from the 2011-2012 survey responses completed by accreditation team leads, team members, and institutions in order that the COA discuss areas of strength and areas in need of improvement related to the processes and procedures for accreditation site visits.

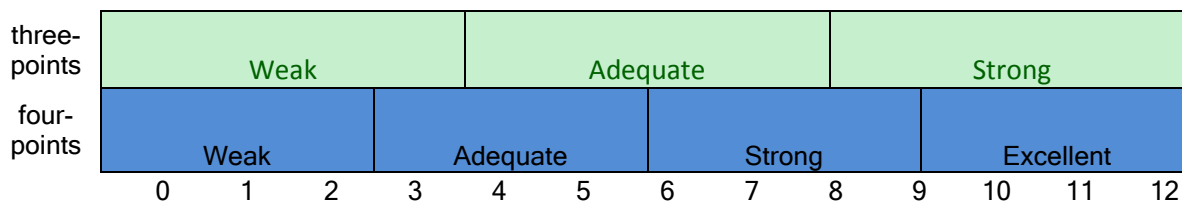
In previous years, staff has developed information items for the Committee on Accreditation that reported on the results of some parts of the evaluation surveys for accreditation site visits that are completed by the institutions hosting the visit, the team leads, team members, and consultants. In the past, certain items from the different surveys were analyzed and reported to the COA. In this item, all quantitative elements of the institution, team lead, and team member surveys will be presented. This item does not contain information shared by team leads, team members, and institutions on open-ended questions in the surveys.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item only.

Background

This item presents data collected from the evaluation surveys of the accreditation site visit, which were completed by each of the three stakeholder groups – the institution undergoing the site visit, the team leads, and the team members. In order to facilitate comparing responses from different stakeholders, it was necessary to create a common scale. The survey completed by institutions used three-point scales, with the labels, weak, average, and strong. Team leads' and team members' surveys used four-point scales, with the labels, weak, average, strong, and excellent. Staff converted the surveys to a 12-point scale to facilitate comparing responses across the surveys. The distribution of the strength of an attribute according to 3- or 4-point response options are related to each other on a 12-point scale as shown below:



Preparations for the Site Visit

About a year before the site visit, the consultant makes initial contact with the institution to establish the consultant's role in helping the institution prepare for the site visit. Due to fiscal constraints, and to increase efficiency of limited consultant time, one-year-out visits are now conducted via a webinar. The webinar provides an overview of the site visit and of

the activities that need to be completed before the visit can occur. Prior to 2010-11, the year-out pre-visit was performed, in person, by the consultant. The consultant then is expected to work closely with the institution over the course of the year to assist the institution in understanding what is expected for accreditation and in preparing for the visit.

Two months before the site visit, the consultant and the team lead visit the institution to ensure that the institution has a clear understanding of the accreditation process and the importance of the institution's accreditation status. The team lead and consultant meets with program coordinators and instructional personnel involved in educator preparation. Most of the pre-visit time is spent reviewing the draft interview schedule, advising the institution on sources of evidence, and finalizing logistics for the visit.

Both before and during the site visit, the consultant functions as the bridge between the institution and the team members. The consultant must ensure that the institution understands how to prepare the documents that are critical to the site visit. This includes ensuring that the institution will provide access to the documents for team members a month before the visit. These documents include the Biennial Reports (BR), staff reviews of the Biennial Reports, the Program Assessment documents (PA), the Preliminary Report of Findings from the PA (Prelim), and the Program Summary from the PA (Summary).

Three surveys provide feedback on the effectiveness of the consultant and the team lead in preparing the institution and team members for the site visit. Institutions are asked to rate the consultants effectiveness prior to the site visit through six items.

Results from this question are shown in Chart 1, below.

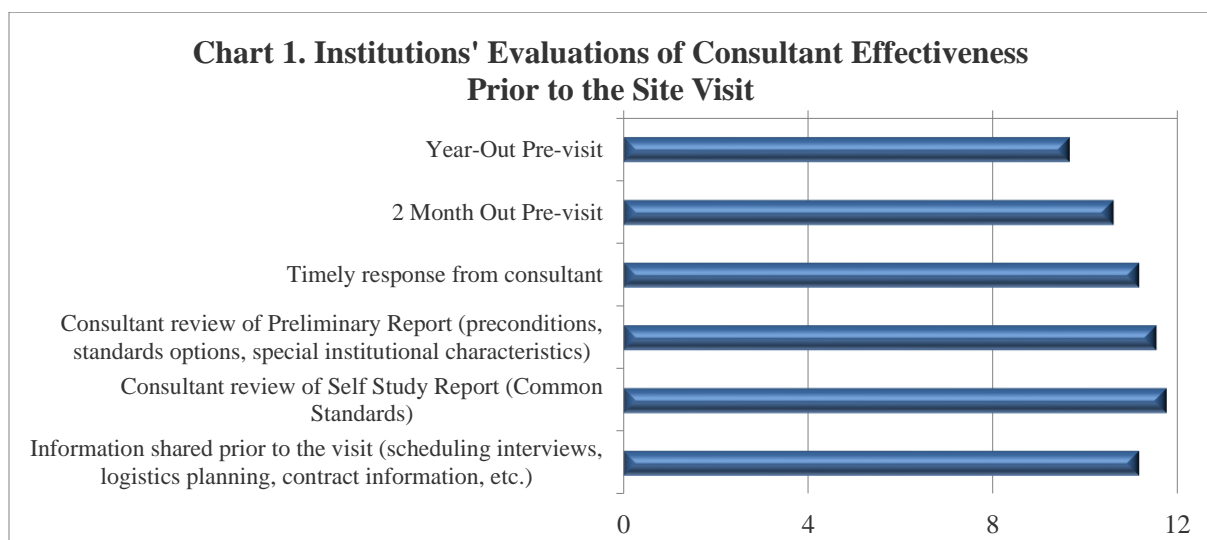
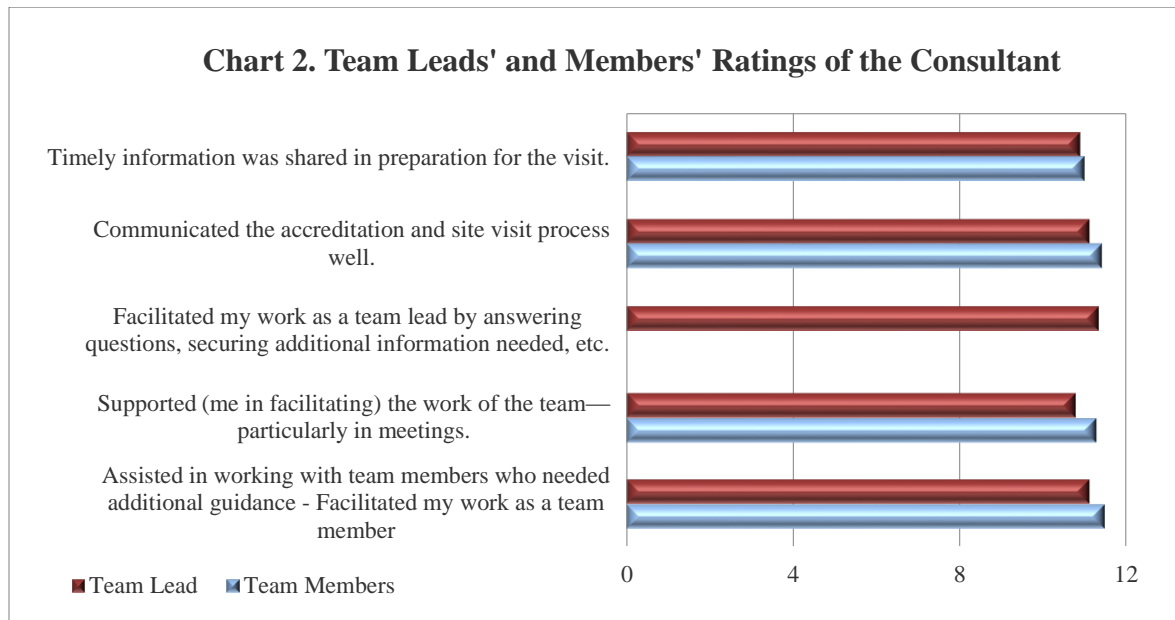


Chart 1 indicates that institutions judge consultants as most effective when they review the Self Study (11.75) and Preliminary Reports (11.53) prior to the visit. Consultants were rated as least effective with the year-out pre-visits. Even so, the ratings for four of the five activities that are currently performed by consultants are all above 11 points, and the fifth score, for the two month-out pre-visit was above the 10-point mark.

Team leads and team members evaluate the consultants' performance on several critical behaviors. Team leads evaluate the consultants on five items and team members, which includes team leads evaluate the consultants on four items. The first two items on the team leads' and team members' evaluations are the same. Two other questions on each survey reflect the same construct, but from different perspectives of team lead vs. team member. Chart 2 reports the results of the team leads' and team members' ratings of consultants, displaying as pairs the ratings of the two same questions or two different questions that focus on the same constructs.



The first two items reflect whether the consultant provided important information on a timely basis, and whether the consultant could communicate the accreditation and site visit processes in a way that was clear and informative. On both of those items, the team members rated the consultant slightly higher than did the team lead, although both sets of respondents gave the consultant high marks for being timely and communicating the accreditation process well.

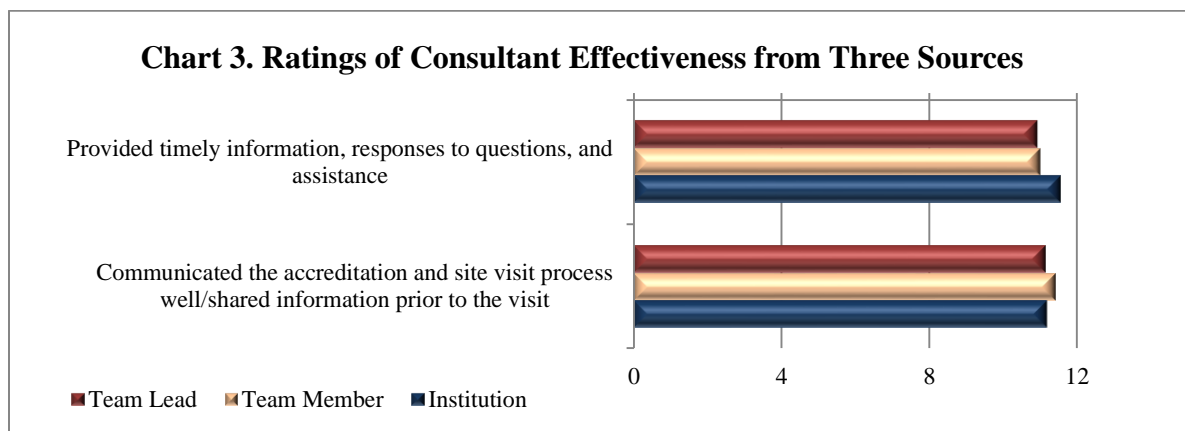
The team leads' survey asks whether the consultant supported the team lead in performing his role by securing additional information, answering questions and, generally, helping the team lead effectively manage the visit. Team leads rated consultants as performing that job well with an average rating of 11.3 on the 12-point scale.

The last two items were asked in a slightly different manner on the two surveys, but the intent of the fourth item was to rate the extent to which the consultant supported the work of the team, directly or indirectly, by supporting the team lead, particularly in meetings. Both the team lead and members rated the consultants as performing that job above the 10-point level. The last item, again, was worded differently on the two surveys, but the intent was to gauge the consultants' ability to help team members work well as a team, including

providing additional assistance when needed. This item received high ratings, both above 11 points.

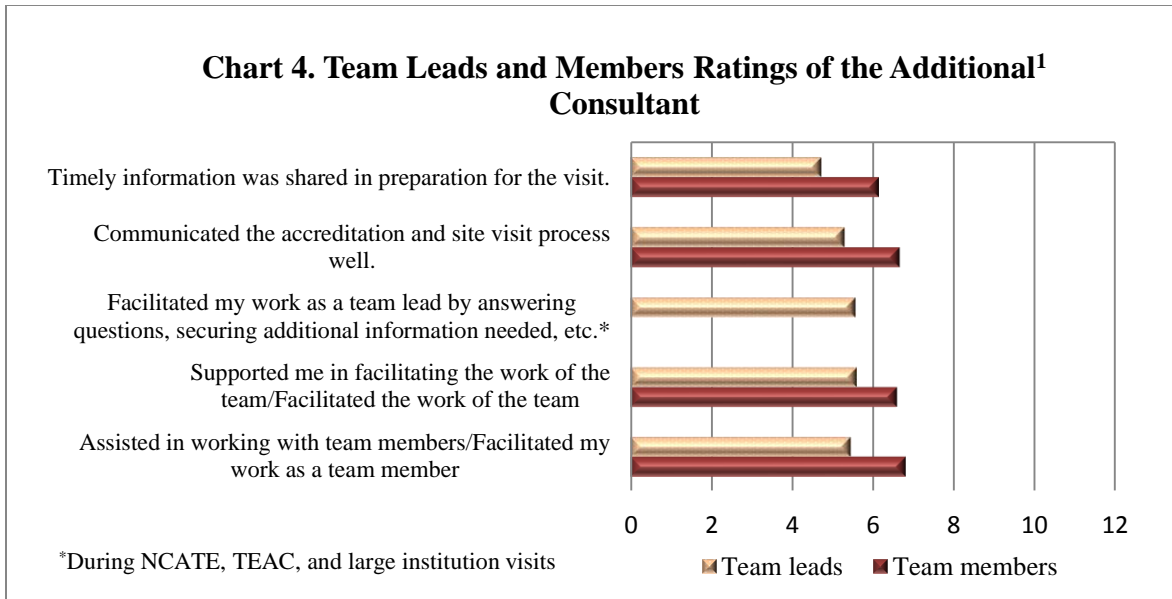
Finally, with regard to the consultants' effectiveness, data from the three surveys was combined, using the 12-point scale. While the questions asked of the institutions are not the same as those asked of team members and leads, on two questions the skills being evaluated are the same. For example, providing timely information to team members/leads requires the same set of skills as providing timely responses to the institution. Similarly, "communicating the accreditation and site visit process well" requires the same skill set as "information shared prior to the visit." Both activities require the consultant to understand how the site visit fits within the accreditation cycle and to be able to communicate clearly the kinds of preparations that need to be made by team members and by the institution.

Chart 3 reports the ratings of team members, leads, and institutions on the two pairs of questions that evaluate essentially the same consultant skills and knowledge.



In general, the ratings from the three sources fell within .6 points of each other and revealed that consultants are viewed as being effective in providing timely information and responses to questions, and in their ability to communicate the accreditation process and site visit procedures and expectations. The lowest score came from team leads who felt that consultants did not provide information and support in as timely a manner as they might. However, even that lowest rating was nearly 11 points on a 12-point scale.

Some site visits required an additional consultant or two. These were NCATE or TEAC joint visits or visits to institutions that had a large number of educator preparation programs. In the instances when there was an additional consultant, team leads and members were asked to rate the additional consultant(s) using the same questions that were used to evaluate the primary consultant. Chart 4 contains the results of those surveys.

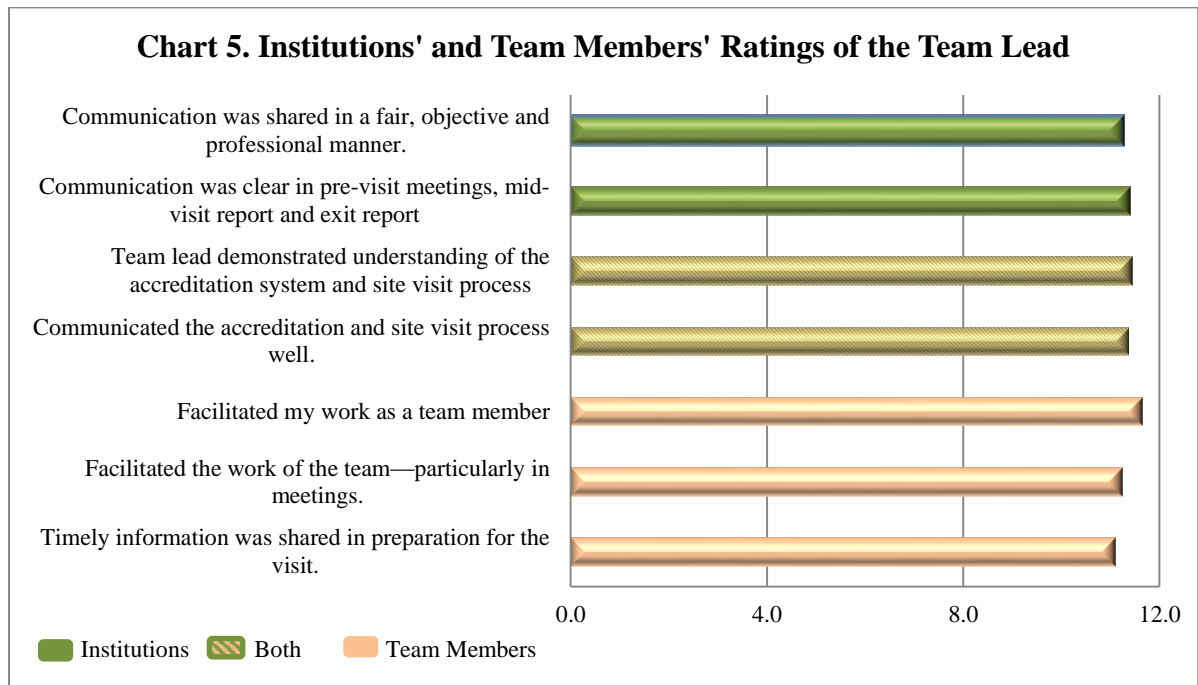


The ratings of the additional consultant are surprisingly low, given the robust ratings of the primary consultant. One possible explanation for the low ratings could be that the team members and leads do not become as familiar with the additional consultant as they do the primary consultant. The additional consultant is often assigned a specific task that reduces opportunities for all team members to become familiar with, or benefit from, the skills and knowledge of the additional consultant.

Institutions and team members are also asked to evaluate the team lead. The team lead plays a pivotal role in ensuring the quality and completeness of the site visit and the resulting accreditation report. The team lead is generally responsible for the overall cohesiveness and effectiveness of the team. The team lead is responsible to ensure that every team member is clear about the standards and the information they need to review during the site visit to enable them to write a credible report on their standards. In addition, the team lead often assumes primary responsibility for one or two common standards (depending on the size of the institution and whether the visit is a joint visit), frequently those that relate to the leadership and governance of the institution and unit teams are organized into clusters – typically the Common Standards cluster and the program sampling cluster. Larger teams are often organized into smaller clusters; for example, the Common Standards Cluster, the Teaching Programs Cluster, and the Specialist Programs Cluster.

Chart 5 reports the results of institutions' and team members' ratings of the team lead. As can be seen in Chart 5, institutions and team members were asked different questions on their surveys, although some of the questions measure similar skills. The top three bars are the average ratings of team leads according to institutions. The bottom four bars are the average ratings of team leads by team members. Clearly, both groups of stakeholders felt that team leads were skillful leaders who communicated in clear, objective terms and who helped team members function effectively. The lowest rating was given by team members

on the question of whether team leads shared information in a timely manner. But even that item received an average rating of 11/12 or 92%.



The two striped bars represent two questions that reflect similar knowledge and skills, one question from each survey. The questions focus on how well the team lead knew the accreditation cycle and site visit processes and how well the team lead communicated that information to institutions and team members. Both groups of stakeholders rated the team lead as very highly skilled (11.4) in that area.

Contributions of the Biennial Report and Program Assessment Processes and Documents to the Site Visit

Some of the preparations team members must complete before the site visit begins is reviewing some, or all, of a set of documents. The documents that are available to the teams include:

- Biennial Reports (*Note: three sets of biennial reports have not yet been available to site visit teams due to the fact that this requirement has not been in place long enough to yield three biennial reports at this point in time.*)
- Staff feedback on the Biennial Reports,
- Program Assessment documents,
- Preliminary Findings, which are reviewers' comments on the program assessment documents, and
- Program Summaries written by the institution that summarizes the program design, curriculum and fieldwork, and candidate assessment for each program.

Chart 6. Percent of Team Members who Reviewed Each Type of Document Prior to the Site Visit

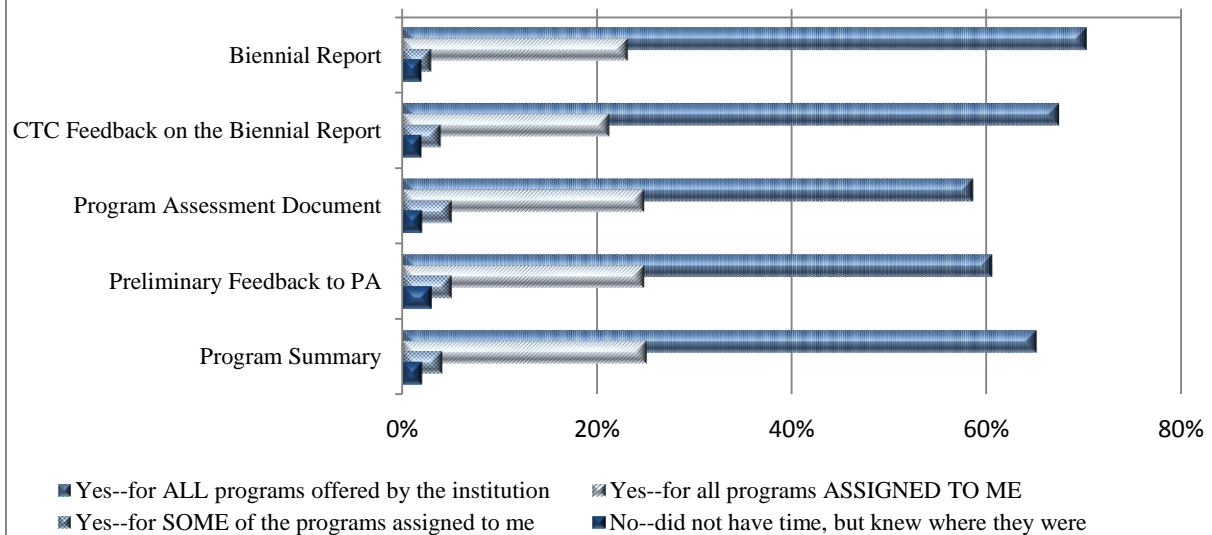


Chart 6 reports the percent of team member respondents who reported whether they read each set of documents prior to the specific site visit and, if they did not, the reason for not reading the document. Seventy percent (70%) of respondents reported having read all documents for every program. It appears that most of the respondents read nearly every document type for every program offered at the institution. This suggests a high level of commitment by team members in preparing for the site visit.

Two questions ask how useful the Biennial Reports, the staff Biennial Report feedback, the Preliminary Report from the Program Assessment, and Program Summaries had been for team members in completing their work during the site visit. Chart 7 reports respondents' feedback for both questions. The near uniformity of the average ratings for each of the documents (ratings fall between 10.26 and 10.59) suggests that the majority of respondents find all of the documents to be very useful.

These findings strongly suggest that team member respondents are recognizing and utilizing the congruence between the Biennial Reports, Program Assessment documents, and the foci of the site visit. Although the average ratings are very close, the slightly larger ratings of the Biennial Report and Program Summary suggest that team members prefer to review documents prepared by the institution rather than documents containing a trained reviewer's responses.

Future agenda items will analyze institutions' responses to questions about the role of the Biennial Report and Program Assessment in preparing for the site visit.

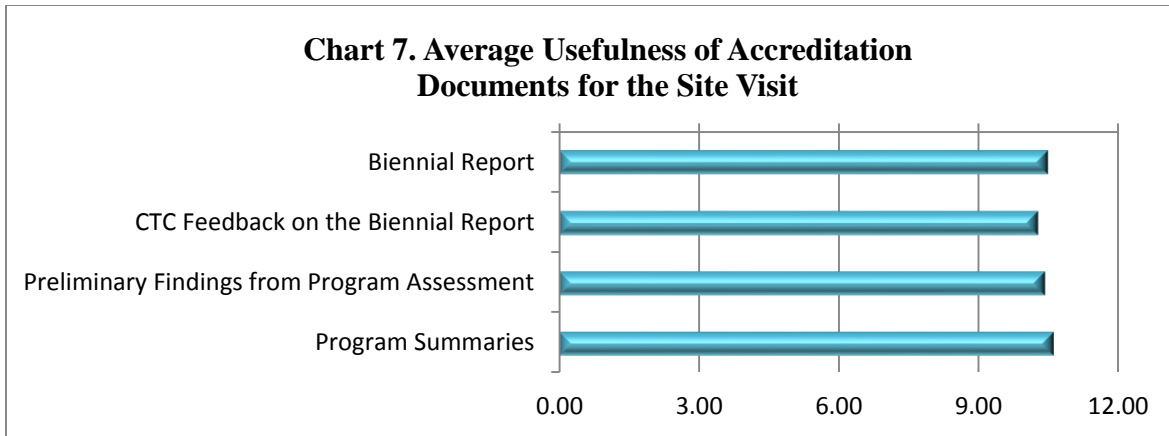
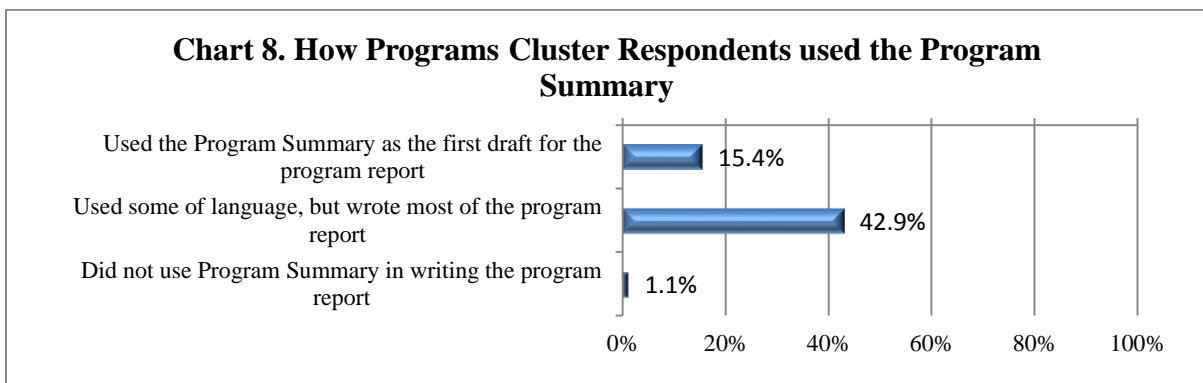


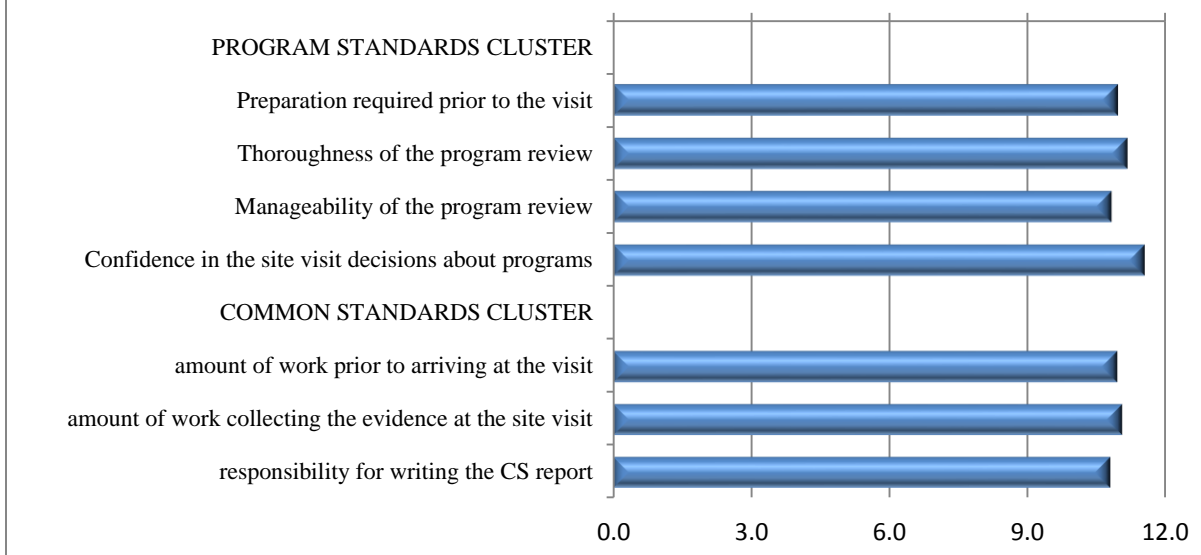
Chart 7 in that it suggests that Program Cluster respondents used Program Summaries as the initial draft of the Program Reports as long as the information contained in the summaries was confirmed by the reviewer and supplemented with information collected and confirmed at the visit. Fifteen percent (15%) of Program Cluster respondents reported using the Program Summary largely as the first draft of the Program Report. About 43% of respondents partially used the Program Summary, but developed most of the Program Report themselves based on their review of the programs on site. Together, these findings suggest that nearly 60% of respondents utilized the Program Summary to support their development of the Program Report.



Reflections by Participants After the Site Visit Ended

Chart 9 displays the average scores given by Program Standards and the Common Standards Cluster respondents when rating how well the visit worked for them in performing responsibilities associated with each cluster. Program Standards respondents, on average, reported that the visit worked very well in allowing them to complete their preparatory work, manage the collection of evidence during the visit, and provide a thorough review of the programs, which led to confidence in the site visit decisions. The average ratings on those four items are between 10.8 and 11.5. The lowest rating was for the manageability of the program review. Respondents rated that item at 10.8 out of 12.

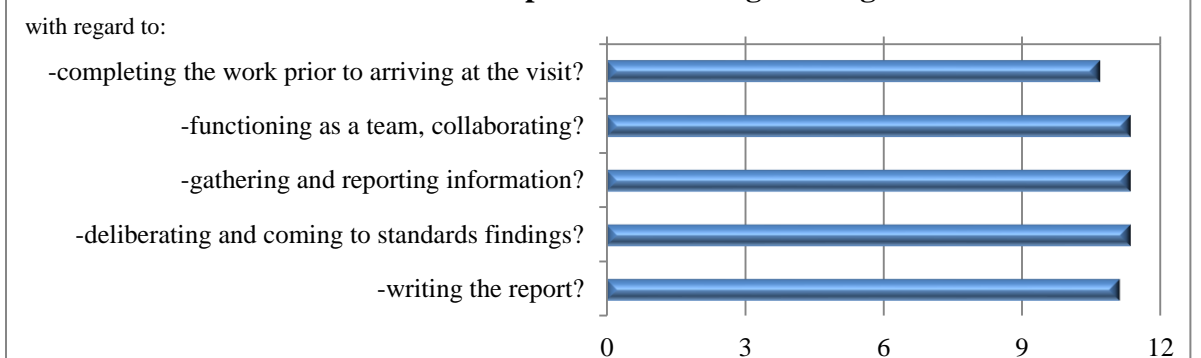
Chart 9. Average Rating of Team Respondents' Reflections on Site Visit by Cluster



Common Standards cluster respondents rated the visit a little lower than did the Program Standards respondents. Common Standards respondents reported that the visit worked at the level of 10.8-11 points, or about 89.8%. They were asked how well the visit worked with regard to the amount of work required prior to the site visit, the amount of work required to collect sufficient evidence at the site visit, and the degree of responsibility each member took for writing the Common Standards portion of the Accreditation Report.

Chart 10, below, shows the Team Lead respondents' ratings when asked to evaluate the work of their site visit team in performing a set of tasks. The chart shows that the team leads, on average, felt that their teams worked very effectively in all of the ways identified.

Chart 10. Team Lead Respondents' Average Ratings of Teams

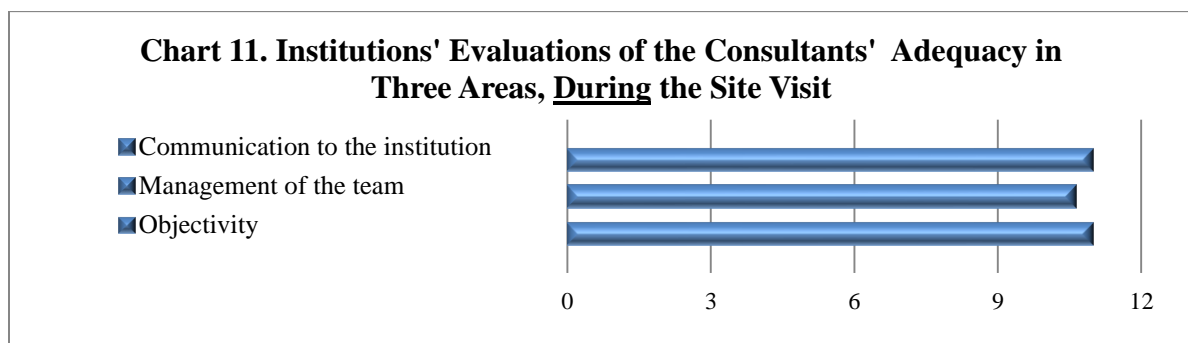


The lowest rating the team leads gave their teams was 10.68 out of 12 possible points for completing (or not completing) assigned work prior to arriving for the site visit. This rating corresponds with the lower average rating (10.8-10.9) that team-members respondents' gave to the item "work preparatory to the visit." Nevertheless, the team member

respondents indicated that the amount of work required prior to the visit worked very or adequately well for them. The difference between team leads' and team members' responses could be a reflection of the additional responsibility that team leads assume for completing the accreditation visit and report development.

Preparations prior to the visit notwithstanding, the team leads rated their teams above 11 out of 12 points on all the other tasks, which included functioning as a team, gathering and reporting information, deliberating and coming to findings, and completing the written report.

Finally, the institutions were asked to provide an overall review of the accreditation visit in two ways. First, the institutions are asked how adequately the consultants performed during the site visit. Chart 11 reports the results of responses to that survey question.



Institutions rated consultants between 10.6 and 10.96 out of 12 points for how well the consultants communicated with the institution during the visit, how well the consultant managed the team, and the extent to which the consultant showed objectivity in their interactions with the team and the institution during the site visit. These data suggest that, in general, institutions are satisfied with the way that consultants are performing their roles, although it is clear that consultants could improve in these areas.

Finally, institutions were asked whether they felt the new accreditation system provided a fair and objective assessment of the institution and all of its credential programs. Of the 21 institutional responses received, 100% of the institutions selected the “yes” response option. While ratings in some areas fell short of the quality expected of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the Committee on Accreditation, consultants, team leads, and team members, institutions reported that the revised system resulted in fair and objective assessments of their institutions. Of any question asked of any stakeholder, this question is probably the most critical.